

Finding Peace in Future Decisions

The world today would tell you that you need to have everything figured out. Your career, your future house, the right spouse, and let's not forget, your retirement. If you neglect or not worry about these standards of life, some may regard you as peculiar or border-line crazy. You must have everything figured out and follow the strict formulas set in place in order to thrive during the limited number of days you have here on earth. Is that all the world has to offer? Stress and anxiety? In a world so filled with rush and pressure, we often times can fall into uncertainties when it comes to decision making. I hope that in this short article, I might encourage you to find God's ultimate peace in every decision you make.

Time is a wonderful gift from God. He has established the world through the dimensions of time. Like any kind of gift, God delights in us when we use time for His glory. The Bible calls us to "number our days" and "make the best use of the time" (Psalm 90:12, Ephesians 5:16). Does this mean that we should always plan and have everything sorted out and have answers to every question regarding our future questions? The short answer is, well, no. Unlike the sickening rush of this world, the Lord enjoys when His children are quietly trusting His perfect and sovereign timing regarding His will for their lives. By slowly meditating on God's Word each day, God will mold our hearts to hunger for a deeper longing for Him in our prayer life.

After the death of Moses, a young powerful, wise, and Godly leader by the name of Joshua leads the people of Israel out in the wilderness. All throughout, he seems to be making the right decisions. The Lord blesses him with many victories over ferocious kings. All of Israel shouts in victory and gives glory to God for all of His mighty works. Joshua seems to be doing everything right until one day, when he makes a severe mistake because of the smallest inaccuracy. When Joshua saw weary men approaching him, he thought that they were from inhabitants of the land. These were in fact Gibeonites, who craftily aimed to deceive Joshua using cunning tactics. They desired to create an alliance and a covenant with this powerful Nation because 6 immense enemy nations sought to destroy them. (Joshua 9:1-4). Their plan worked, and the young leader made an oath to an enemy nation whom he thought were simple sojourners seeking

rest. Joshua, in fact, directly disobeyed a clear commandment given by the Lord to not form any kind of alliance with enemy nations. (Exodus 23:32-33).

Joshua undoubtedly would have seen this trap coming if he prayed to God beforehand. In Joshua 9:14 it says that he "did not ask counsel from the Lord." God doesn't want us to take rash and rapid decisions, but in everything, to pray and ask wisdom from God. In fact, it took Jesus 30 years before starting His ministry! He earnestly and constantly prayed day in, day out for His ministry and for the glory of His Father. How much more should we pray concerning our uncertainties and directions in our life. We should always take a step back when presented with an opportunity and follow the wise counselling given by James. "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." (James 1:5). Our Lord being rich in wisdom promises to grant us wisdom and understanding if we come before His gracious throne in prayer. The Word of God instructs us several times to not be wise according to our own futile knowledge. The book of Proverbs, for instance, warns us countless times to not lean on our own understanding. If we obey this wise instruction, we are encouraged by the fact that "He [God] will make your paths straight". (Proverbs 3:5-6). And again, "*Commit* your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established". In the same way, Romans 8 explains that if we set our minds on the flesh, we will die. And those who set their minds on the flesh cannot please God because it blinds them of the infinite beauty of knowing His Spirit.

Furthermore, God illuminates our path through His Word. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105). His glorious and sovereign light is displayed in His words found in the Bible. They are trustworthy because Jesus says "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." (Matthew 24:35). Immense peace can be found in that statement alone. Our Lord is eternal and infinite in wisdom. He is found within the scriptures, so how much more should we seek them out like a man digging for eternal treasures.

Although the Bible doesn't clearly state what kind of house we should buy or what career we should pursue, it calls us to glorify God in every situation in life. When we take the time to savor and satisfy our thirst in God's everlasting promises found in His word His Word, we become more like Christ. A living sacrifice. We are shown in Romans 12 that when you present your body to God as a living sacrifice, you will be transformed by the renewal of your mind and be less conformed to the standards of this world. This is exactly the point! We must constantly marinate our minds in the Bible in order to please

God in our spiritual worship. Once your mind isn't fixed on earthly things, you are able to pursue and discern God's will in future commitments. The Word of God transforms the way you think, it transforms our minds so that we can live in view of eternity. That is ultimately God's will for our lives; eternal fellowship in heaven as His adopted children.

Another clear passage that talks about this is Ephesians 5:10-11. "And try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them." Again, we see the same principle; pursue the delights of God by transforming your mind AND killing the carnal conformities of this earth. Ephesians 5 is all about self-evaluation and a directive to Christ's example. To add, verse 18 calls us to "not get drunk with wine, [...] but be filled with the Spirit". In order to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we need to be sober minded. You cannot expect to be filled with the Spirit and understand God's calling for you if you consciously choose to follow the patterns and foolishness of this world. Verse 17 points us to this conclusion "Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." We can comprehend God's will by being conformed to His Son. And as we follow our precious Savior, we seek and desire to glorify Him above all. He thus provides us with knowledge and understanding on how to do so. Have you ever loved someone so much where you just want to please them above all and forsake your desires entirely? That is what we feel when we grow in our relationship with Christ.

When your mind is swallowed up by your passion for Christ, you won't need to worry about your life. Living for Christ is a constant denial of self, in order for Him to increase in you. God blesses those who have this kind of mindset for it is written "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you." (Isaiah 26:3)

I would like for you to closely read the following passage in Matthew 16.

When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. Jesus said to them, Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, We brought no bread." But Jesus, aware of this, said, O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that he

did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

What do we observe here? The disciples make their first complaint by saying that they forgot the bread. Jesus takes this opportunity to teach them a lesson about some of the dangers of this world: the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Sadducees. The disciples don't seem to catch on what Jesus is trying to say because they keep saying "we brought no bread". (V7). They were so focused on the fleshly temporal sustenance of life that they were completely inattentive to what Jesus was trying to tell them. Jesus is trying to teach them and show them the way of righteousness but unfortunately, the disciples are so focused on earthly things that they neglect the heavenly things Christ is attempting to show them. Often times, we only give God 10% of our attention. We listen to Him partially instead of entirely. We only listen for the things we want to hear and block out the rest. Sometimes we might just be too distracted to listen what His Word is trying to teach us. This constant doubt about the future demonstrates lack of faith. Without faith, we cannot please God. (Hebrews 6:11). Therefore, if we do not closely listen to Christ with faith, we will inevitably fall into doubt about His will for our future decisions. How then do we listen with faith? In this case, Jesus reminds His disciples of the numerous times He graciously and miraculously provided food to thousands of people on several occasions. He reminds them that He is totally capable of providing them with what they need. If God has allowed you to enter into this season of doubt, He will provide a way out. (1 Corinthians 10:13). God is faithful, He will never leave you or forsake you. In times of uncertainty, it is crucial to cling, meditate and believe God's promises found in His Word. I find the one in Romans 8:28 to be very helpful; "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose".

His promises are our spiritual sustenance, our anchors, our guides.

In times of doubt, it is also to remind yourself of everything God has done for you in the past and believe He will be there for you again. When we remember Christ's unfailing work in our life, our troubled hearts spring up with joy.

So maybe in your case, this story might sound like this:

When [Your name] reached this point in his life, he was uncertain about which path to take regarding his education. Jesus said "My son, do not worry about tomorrow, seek my kingdom and my righteousness above all else and all these things will be added

unto you". [Your name] continued worrying about tomorrow since he was reminded of the uncertainties of "tomorrow", completely missing out everything else Jesus said. But Jesus, aware of this, said, "O you of little faith, why are you reminding yourself about your doubts of the future? Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember [all that God has faithfully and graciously done for you in the past]?"

God wants you to rest in His sovereign ability to lead you through these uncertainties in your life. He wants your eyes to be so focused on Him, that you will laugh at the thought of a doubt regarding your future decision making. When we are so focused on heavenly things, earthly things such as your job, education, finances won't really matter anymore. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." John 14:27.